

# SCIENCE & EDUCATION Impact

Benefits from USDA/Land-Grant Partnership

## Tribal Colleges Celebrate Decade of Service Striving to improve the lives of Native Americans.

*Native Americans living in tribal communities suffer higher rates of diabetes and unemployment than the general population does. The USDA and the 31 1994 land-grant institutions have worked together for 10 years to promote healthy lifestyle changes, access to education, and community development.*

### Payoff

- **Diet and diabetes.** Many tribal colleges are working to prevent diabetes and other diet-related illnesses through healthful lifestyle education. **South Dakota State** and **Sisseton Wahpeton Community College** researchers found that traditional foods are being prepared in a less healthful way, such as sweeter pemmican. **Fort Belknap College** treated 225 people in Montana to a tasting of fresh garden produce and demonstrated how to grow and cook the vegetables. **Oglala Lakota College** got 76 people involved in gardening to grow their own fresh food in South Dakota. Nearly 90 percent of the students and their families continued to garden after the project concluded. **Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute** produced a CD-ROM and video titled "Native Americans and Diabetes" and distributed them to 26 child care sites in tribal communities in New Mexico.
- **From garden to fork.** In South Dakota, **Sisseton Wahpeton Community College** offers a one-year certificate in nutrition and a two-year degree in dietetics. The college also provided nutrition and gardening education to 320 K-8 children and 90 adults. In North Dakota, **United Tribes Technical College** provided 150 elementary schoolchildren with nutrition-education resource kits and healthy snacks. **Turtle Mountain Community College** Extension's Summer Youth Camp provided hands-on activities in food preparation, gardening, and use of native plants and herbs to 35 to 50 North Dakota youth per day. A health and fitness program provided monthly blood pressure and blood sugar checks to 25 community members.
- **Handle with care.** **Montana State** is working with **Blackfeet Community College**, **Chief Dull Knife College**, **Fort Belknap Community College**, **Fort Peck Community College**, **Little Big Horn Community College**, **Salish Kootenai College**, and **Stone Child Community College** to offer culturally sensitive food-safety training. The goal of Top Notch Food Safety is to help food

RESEARCH,  
EXTENSION AND  
EDUCATION  
AT WORK

Search for more at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/impact>

# SCIENCE & EDUCATION Impact

## Benefits from USDA/Land-Grant Partnership

service workers in tribal communities make informed, responsible decisions to reduce food-safety hazards. Of the 251 people trained in safe food handling, 85 percent adopted some of the practices.

- **You're hired!** Some Native Americans in North Dakota are receiving literacy, interpersonal communication, and job readiness training from **Cankdeska Cikana Community College** Extension's Spirit Lake Volunteerism and Leadership Development Program. More than 90 percent of program graduates are employed, compared with 30 percent reservation-wide employment. Of those who took the training and volunteered, 40 percent are enrolled in college. **Leech Lake Tribal College's** Steps to Success program led to one-third of the Minnesota participants becoming employed and another third entering college. **Chief Dull Knife College** Extension in Montana, **Diné College** in Arizona, **Northwestern Indian College** in cooperation with **Washington State**, and **Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute** in New Mexico offer similar training programs.
- **Blinded with science.** New programs are enticing Native Americans to study science. **South Dakota State**, **Lower Brule Community College**, **Oglala Lakota College**, **Si Tanka College**, and **Sisseton Wahpeton Community College** have launched a program called Developing Native American Scientists. With USDA Forest Service Products Laboratory, the **College of Menominee Nation** has a program designed to increase representation of Native Americans in the sciences, and cultivate future educators and leaders for Wisconsin. **Minnesota** and **Fond du Lac Community College** started a faculty exchange for agriculture, food, and environment classes.
- **To a higher degree.** The **South Dakota** Prairie Ph.D. program enables students to live in Indian communities while pursuing advanced degrees. Students learn about Lakota environmental management at **Oglala College**, take a statistics course at **Lower Brule**, and go to **South Dakota State** to study research methods. "I can keep my job, not have to keep two households going, and go to school with minimum time on campus," said one doctoral candidate who teaches at a tribal college.

- **Fostering future leaders.** **Nebraska** Extension and **Little Priest Tribal College** partnered to launch a new cultural awareness and leadership program for youth in grades 7 - 12 called Be Strong and Educate My Children. As a result, teens have gotten more involved in youth development activities and are interacting with other youth and adults outside their school. After completing a financial management course at **Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College** in Wisconsin, 96 percent of students were proficient at household budgets and 38 percent reported developing their own budgets. Over the past four years, 1,800 residents of 4 northeast Wisconsin tribal communities attended the **College of Menominee Nation** for training on topics such as first aid, child abuse prevention, and business enterprises. **Fort Peck Community College** also has programs designed to teach Montana youth leadership and life skills.
- **Putting plants in their place.** After wildfires burned 100,000 acres of New Mexico forests, **Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute** forestry students grew more than 50,000 ponderosa pine and Douglas fir seedlings to replant tribal forests. To control soil erosion aggravated by Arizona's drought, **Diné College** researchers reintroduced more than 80 native plant species, which are thriving. Students are collecting and saving seeds and finding new ways to protect their native lands. In response to yellow iris and orange and yellow hawkweed invading the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana and impeding water delivery, **Salish Kootenai College** started educating neighborhood groups. Within two years, 75 organizations had joined the battle of the weeds.



**Cooperative State Research, Education,  
and Extension Service**  
United States Department of Agriculture

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service in cooperation with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy, the Academic Programs Committee on Organization and Policy, the International Programs Committee on Organization and Policy, and the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)